LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION
A Guide to Water Efficient Landscapes

Most Common Watering Mistakes

Much of the water applied to lawns and gardens never gets absorbed by the plants. Common ways that water is wasted include:

**Runoff:** Applying water too rapidly causes runoff, because grass and plants can only absorb so much water at a time. When runoff occurs, soil, fertilizers, and pesticides can be carried to nearby streams.

**Evaporation:** Watering in the middle of the day or using a sprinkler that sprays a fine mist causes much of the water you apply to be lost through evaporation. Plants don’t have enough time to absorb the water before it is evaporated by the sun.

**Underwatering:** Watering too little is wasteful because it does little to alleviate any drought stress that the plants may have.

**Overwatering:** Applying too much or too often causes the greatest waste of water. In addition to over watering the plant, excessive irrigation can leach nutrients deep into the soil away from plant roots, which increases the chances of runoff pollution.
All water waste is prohibited in Sec. 31-141.38 of the City of Laredo Water Conservation Ordinance. Any violation reported must be verified by one of the inspectors at the time the violation is occurring or enough evidence that links the water waste to a customer before taking action. Water Waste is defined as any water other than natural precipitation, that flows from a property right-of-way or adjacent private property. Landscape irrigation is the most common cause of water waste, but it can also result from leaks, car washing and other uses of water. Water waste results in the loss of a valuable natural resource.

Penalties for Violation of the Water Conservation Plan

After receiving (2) two written warnings for any section or combination of sections, a person who violates this Water Conservation Plan shall be issued a citation and may be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor. Upon citation and conviction, the alleged violator shall be punished by a fine of five hundred dollars ($500) per violation per day. Each violation of a particular section of this ordinance shall constitute a separate offense, and each day that an offense continues shall be considered a new violation for purposes of enforcing this plan. Note: A previous violation shall not be considered if a period of one (1) year has elapsed since the violation was first incurred or the property is acquired by a new owner or tenant.
Good Watering Techniques

The key to watering lawns is to apply water infrequently, yet thoroughly. This creates a deep, well-rooted lawn that efficiently uses the water that is stored in the soil. To know when to water your lawn, simply observe the grass. Wilting and discoloration are signs of water stress. Water early in the morning, before 10 a.m. Avoid watering from mid-morning to late afternoon, when you can lose one-third of your water to evaporation. Also avoid watering in the evening, because lawns and plants that are left wet overnight are more prone to disease. If you design and install your own permanent landscape irrigation system, it must meet required state and local design standards and requirements. To review the irrigation rules for Texas, please visit <www.tceq.texas.gov/licensing/irrigation/landscape.html>. For your local rules, please contact your water utility.

Additional Resources

For More Information, contact:
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